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MANUAL TRAINING IN ALTRUISM

The problem of religious education develops the more we attempt its solution. Application of the principles of religious pedagogy to the work of the church has given us the graded Sunday school and the graded lessons. In this field our experience is altogether gratifying. As an instructor in the Bible, the Sunday school of today is far in advance of the best Sunday schools fifteen years ago.

That which confronts the church worker today is, however, something new, an application of the great principle that no education is to be founded wholly in instruction.

Our public schools have recognized this fact and are putting in manual training of various sorts, not for the purpose of teaching boys and girls trades, but for its general educational value. The child is to learn by doing, not simply remembering. Expressional activity is necessary. If truth is to work out into life, it must be first worked into life by the working of life. If this be true of arithmetic is it any less true of morals?



The principles of manual training must be applied to our religious education. To memorize the Golden Rule is an admirable thing; to correlate that rule with life is a better thing; but to give child and man practice in the actual working of the Golden Rule is the new task of education.

Religious education involves something more than indoor relief of diseased opinion. Religion must be brought out into the actual world in which we live. Those who are to be the religious people of tomorrow must be taught the principles and the practice of the vicarious life. One great difficulty of our Sunday schools has been that they have given information and exhortation but not experimentation. What we need now is a methodology that shall teach

the members of every Sunday-school class to put into operation the principles which are being instilled into their minds.



We have no intention at this time of discussing this matter in detail. Such discussion will come in later numbers of this journal. But we are concerned to emphasize strongly the new field into which the Sunday school must advance. If it is to teach children the whole gospel, it must teach them how to work its principles into various forms of child life. If it teaches children to remember the poor, it should organize itself to visit the poor, and study the conduct of relief stations, United Charities, city, county, and state institutions which minister to the unfortunate poor. If the children's sympathies for the poor are to be turned into practical service they should be taught to make gifts through the Sunday school to needy persons, and delegates of every class should take part in the actual distribution of such gifts to the persons who need them.

If children are to be taught the moral significance of citizenship they should be taught to observe the needs of their community in so far as they can be properly studied by the young.

Children should not be taught to study vice because they are at too imitative an age, but members of the adult department should learn to discuss the moral issue involved in vice. They should come to see that neglect of sanitary arrangements, disease due to vicious conditions, and other matters which will make them feel the fundamental Christian principle that whatever is socially injurious is sinful are a violation of God's will for which a community as well as individuals need to repent.

To expect that such training will create a generation of Wilberforces is beyond the mark, but it can at least create a generation sensitive to the moral significance of actual life and with elemental experience in ministering to the needs of such life.

The young person, who is made to feel through experience something of the magnitude of the task to which Jesus set himself, will be more intelligent and more responsive in meeting the needs which our social order exhibits.

If we are to have manual training in the interest of larger industrial efficiency, let us have a manual training also in altruism.